

SANITARY COMMISSION.

No. 55.

REPORTS FROM THE WESTERN DEPARTMENT.

LOUISVILLE, Oct. 24, 1862.

FRED. LAW OLMSTED, Esq.,

Gen. Sec. San. Com.:

Dear Sir,—I herewith transmit the report of Dr. Reed, our inspector on the measures of relief extended by the Sanitary Commission to the sufferers in the late battle of Perryville. From a combination of causes, the condition of the wounded in this fight was peculiarly distressing. No adequate provision had been made for their care. The stock of medicines and hospital stores in the hands of the surgeons was insignificant. They had almost no ambulances, no tents, no hospital furniture, and no proper food. In addition to this, the small village of Perryville afforded but very imperfect means for the care of the great number of wounded concentrated there, either in the way of buildings to be used as hospitals, or resources and appliances of any other kind.

The surrounding country had been overrun and devastated by two great armies, and the inhabitants impoverished in all possible ways. As a consequence, nearly everything necessary to the proper care of sick or wounded men, had to be imported from a considerable distance. And before the requisite assistance in men and means could, through any agencies, reach the battle-field, untold suffering, and even deaths had occurred, which might have been prevented, if help and supplies had been present, or readily accessible.

It is true, that such sad scenes as those witnessed at Perryville, have been recorded among the incidents of nearly all battles of ancient or modern times, so that by many, they have come to be regarded as necessary accompaniments of the carnage of conflict, and as inseparable ingredients of the horror of war. This, however, I contend, is a great and fatal fallacy. I am no optimist, and have no idea that war can be so softened down and christianized, as to be otherwise than unutterably hideous in all its aspects; and yet my observation has led me to believe that by far the saddest

cases which war presents, the cases of those who lie for days helpless and neglected on the battle-field, who perish by the slow oozing of their life-blood, by cold, by heat, by thirst, by starvation, when the simplest succor might restore them to life and health, to the ranks, and their homes—that these, the only cases in which the victims of war are now *tortured* to death, are generally gratuitous and unnecessary exhibitions of individual perversity, or official incompetence, generated and grown under a vicious system of military administration;—and that being such, they are a disgrace to our civilization, our Christianity, and our cause. You will perhaps think the language I use, unwarranted, but I am fully assured it is true. The evil to which I refer, is a great and sad one, and if, as I believe, it is avoidable, it is one that must be abated if we hope to keep alive the patriotism and enthusiasm of our soldiers, and retain the favor of an all-seeing God. But you will ask—If these are crimes, not fates or Providences, who are their authors?

The surgeons are known to have the immediate care of the sick and wounded of our armies, and are generally held responsible for their treatment in all respects. It is therefore exceedingly common to hear in conversation, or to see in print, the gravest charges of cruelty, incompetency, or gross neglect of duty made against surgeons of the regiments, of the divisions, or the department in which these instances of unnecessary suffering have occurred. This I can assure you is, as a general rule, a great and cruel mistake.

Since the war began, it has been my special duty to look after the manner in which the surgeons connected with the armies of the West have done their work. Many of them I have known for years in civil life, and of most who have held official positions in this Department since its first organization, I can say that I have had the means of learning with great accuracy whether or not they have been faithful to their trust. And now, with nothing to fear from their displeasure, or gain from their favor, moved by regard for truth and justice alone, my testimony is—that, as a class, they have been greatly misjudged, and cruelly misrepresented.

It is not true, as seems to be too generally suspected, that when a medical man accepts a military appointment, he thereby and at once sells himself, body and soul, to the Devil.

On the contrary, I do not hesitate to say, that the most hard-working, self-denying, earnest, and conscientious officers in the army, are its surgeons. I do not, of course, arrogate to the class any superhuman virtues. They are all simply men, and have man's imperfections. And there are those among them so ignorant, and others so depraved, that they are a curse to the service, *opprobria* to the profession and a disgrace to those by whom

they were commissioned. Yet such are few. Most are laborious, faithful, and meritorious. The greater part have passed a rigid examination before a competent medical board, by whom they were declared well qualified for their duties, and have since, by their services in the field, vindicated the propriety of their selection from the great number of candidates for the places which they hold. During the past year all the surgeons have been overworked. None that I know have escaped disease contracted in the discharge of their duties; many have gone home with their health permanently broken, and not a few have been martyrs to their faithfulness.

Nor is it true that the chief medical officers are any exceptions to the rule I have laid down for the corps. It gives me pleasure to state that after long and thorough experience of the manner in which the duties of their offices have been administered by the venerable chief of Gen. Halleck's medical staff, Dr. McDougall; Gen. Buell's medical director, Dr. Murray; and those who now hold the most responsible positions at this point, Drs. Head and Mylert, respectively medical director and purveyor, I have found in their manner and measures very much to admire and praise; almost nothing to condemn. I am sure all who know the gentlemen I have enumerated as I do, will unite with me in pronouncing them faithful and efficient officers, high-toned and honorable men. Struggling with various and discouraging *impedimenta*, they have earnestly and with singleness of purpose, striven to do their duty thoroughly and well, and have deplored more than others can, the embarrassments by which their action has been fettered, their good and wise purposes thwarted. Could the truth be known, they would receive sympathy and honor from the public, rather than the obloquy so many are disposed to heap upon them.

Who, then, is responsible for the facts, that at the battles of Fort Donelson, Shiloh, and Perryville, no adequate provision was made beforehand for the care of the wounded; that proper supplies of medicines and hospital stores and an abundance of appropriate food were not on hand or within easy reach? Whose fault is it that there were so few surgeons and trained assistants; so few ambulances and ambulance attendants, that men must lie two, three, four days on the battle-field before they could be taken up, sheltered from the sun, the frost, the rain; their hunger and thirst assuaged, and their wounds dressed?

Whose fault is it that many a poor fellow, hardy and brave though he might be, unequal to the torture entailed by such neglect—worn out by his long suffering and exposure—has yielded up his life so precious to his country and his home?

To any one acquainted with the theory of our military organization, and familiar with the *personnel* of our army, the question need not be a

difficult one. The fault is, for the most part, incident to the workings of a defective system, in special instances aggravated by individual incompetency. The defect in our military system, a defect which bears the sad cases I have described as its natural fruit, is this—that to the Medical Department, on which the responsibility of the care of the sick reposes, *no part of the functions of the Quartermaster and Commissary Department are independently entrusted.*

As a consequence, the sick, having no official representative in these departments, are constantly the victims of the caprices or necessities of those whose duty is first to do their own work, and then attend to them if they can. When, and not before, the surgeons are provided with independent means of transportation and subsistence for the sick, we can hold them fully responsible for their care. In theory, the “art of war” is a game like chess, in which the combinations and movements can only be constantly successful where the power of the pieces remain unimpaired. To the purely military tactician, therefore, the sick of his command become an embarrassing and vexatious hindrance. They are really eyesores to him; and, associated with them, the surgeons, their guardians, are too often looked upon as necessary evils, and with no special complacency. If fully inspired with the *animus* of his profession, and not deterred by considerations of humanity, every military commander would abandon the disabled of his forces without care. Having before him the sole object to win the game, he would throw off every incubus at once. Now, humanity forbids that this should be done, but the inducement and the impulse remain, and their influence is felt by all military men. Their impatience under the restraint of a long sick list is shown in various ways.

One General of Division within the last few months, and under my own observation, determined to eradicate sickness from his command, by ordering all men under medical treatment to appear daily at dress parade. And so they did, day after day—those able to walk, dragging themselves out under the broiling sun to witness the ceremony; those unable to help themselves, dragged thither in ambulances. This system, if pursued sufficiently long, would doubtless have been successful, driving all malingerers back to the ranks; the really sick rapidly to their graves.

Another military chieftain, commander of a great army at a later date, indeed, a very recent date, led his forces, by rapid marches, across a State—many, if not all, his regimental surgeons being prohibited, by special order, from taking with them any medical supplies whatever. Some of them are to-day, as I know, following their regiments with no other remedial agents than such as they carry, in defiance of orders, about their persons.

Will it surprise you, then, if I tell you that when the forces of this General met the enemy, and a bloody battle ensued, there was no adequate preparation for the wounded, and, as a consequence of this want of preparation, there was great suffering, and lives were lost? Nor will it surprise you to learn that the chief medical officer of this army, an eminent surgeon, a most efficient officer, a man endeared to all his associates in that army by his kindness and courtesy, after months endurance of what seemed a studied disregard of the claims of his Department, felt compelled to ask to be relieved.

You may perhaps have been wearied by this long disquisition which I have inflicted upon you, but it includes, as it seems to me, an explanation of the reasons why adequate provision was not made for the care of the wounded at Perryville, and why, in defiance of the lessons taught by the history of our previous engagements, the scenes of suffering and destitution there witnessed were here repeated.

In answering these questions, it also points out the method in which our modern civilization and more refined humanity can improve upon the methods of the past, and mitigate in great measure some of the darkest horrors of war. To annunciate more formally the proposition I have made—not a new one, as I am aware—*by the addition to the medical corps of a body of trained assistants, whose duty it shall be to gather up and remove the wounded from the battle-field, and perform for them the first necessary offices of relief; and entrusting to that department independent means of transportation and subsistence for the sick, much will be done to economise life, prevent suffering, and improve the health of the army.** If this be true, the subject demands our immediate attention, and our most earnest and unwearied efforts.

At the time of the battle of Perryville, I was temporarily absent from the city, and received the news of the occurrence while on my way back. My place here, however, was well supplied by our veteran inspector, Dr. Read, who acted in the emergency with his usual promptness and wisdom.

The measures which he adopted, and the results he accomplished, are simply yet graphically given in the accompanying report which he has prepared at my request.

* *Note by H. W. B.*—The Sanitary Commission and the Surgeon General have both for many months, with poor success, been urging these reforms on the War Department. A gleam of light very recently has shone in upon the dark prospect, in a request made by Gen. McClellan for an ambulance corps.

On my arrival a few hours after he had left, I found the gentlemen composing the Louisville Branch of our Commission busily engaged in sending forward supplies in the ambulances which had been provided for him, with that view, by the Medical Director. Twenty-one (21) loads went forward at that time, including, besides the ordinary variety of hospital stores, kegs of fresh butter, coops of live chickens, and things of that sort, which proved to be of inestimable value to those for whom they were intended. Through the intervention of my friend Capt. S. Perkins, of the Quartermaster's Department, these ambulances were attached to an ammunition train which travelled rapidly day and night, arriving there much sooner than they could have done under any other circumstances.

Owing to the fact that the most important supply train forwarded by the Medical Purveyor, was prevented for many days from reaching its destination, the value of the stores forwarded to Dr. Read was greatly enhanced.

Most of these stores were furnished from the depot of the Louisville Branch of the Sanitary Commission, but included large and most valuable contributions from Cincinnati and Cleveland. Subsequently, still further shipments were made, at my request, from these points, as also from Chicago, all of which have gone forward, and are now being distributed by Dr. Read and a corps of assistants which I have furnished him.

I should also mention that a delegation from the Cincinnati Branch of our Commission, consisting of several surgeons, and a distributing agent, with stores, accompanied the ambulance train, and rendered important service in the care of the wounded. I regret to say, however, that the agent, for reasons best known to himself, refused to co-operate with Dr. Read in the distribution of the stores.

At a later date a messenger arrived from Chicago, having Sanitary stores in charge, which were also forwarded to the field.

I cannot close my letter without expressing my high appreciation of the promptness and energy with which the Louisville Associates engaged in the work of providing for the wants of the Perryville sufferers, as well as the disinterested and catholic spirit which controlled their action.

It gives me pleasure also to testify to the hearty and efficient co-operation of Dr. Head, Medical Director, and Dr. Mylert, Medical Purveyor, in this city. While fully alive to their responsibilities, zealously and faithfully doing their own duty, they afforded us every possible facility in the discharge of ours.

Very respectfully yours,

J. S. NEWBERRY,

*Secretary for the Western Department of the
Sanitary Commission.*

REPORT OF DR. A. N. READ,

Inspector U. S. San. Com., on the Measures of Relief afforded to the Wounded in the Battle at Perryville, Oct. 8th.

LOUISVILLE, KY., Oct. 23, 1862.

DR. J. S. NEWBERRY,

Sec. Western Department San. Com.:

Dear Sir,—Immediately on the reception of the news of the late battle I took such measures as were in my power for the performance of our duty in the relief of the wounded.

On application to Dr. Head, Medical Director, I obtained at once three Government wagons, and the promise of 21 ambulances, to be ready the day following. The wagons were loaded with stores from the Louisville Commission, and started the same evening for Perryville. I myself hired a buggy, and taking with me Mr. Thomasson, whom I had engaged to go with and assist me, pushed on as rapidly as possible.

We found the first hospital for the wounded at Maxville; this was a tavern, with sixteen rooms, containing 150 wounded and 30 sick, mostly from a Wisconsin regiment. 25 were in cots; some on straw; the others on the floor, with blankets.

The surgeon in charge—P. P. White, of the 101st Indiana—had authority to purchase all things necessary. Flour was very scarce; corn-meal, beef, mutton, and chickens plenty. There was no coffee, tea, or sugar to be had. The cooking was all done at a fire-place, with two camp-kettles and a few stew-pans. The ladies of the town, however, were taking articles home, and cooking them there; thus giving great assistance.

From this place to Perryville, some ten miles, nearly every house was an hospital. At one log cabin we found 20 of the 10th Ohio, including the major and two captains. At another house were several of the 93d Ohio; and the occupants were very poor, but doing all in their power for those in their charge. The mother of the family promised to continue to do so, but said, with tears in her eyes, she feared that she and her children must starve when the winter came. As at the other houses on this road, the sick here had no regular medical attendance. I therefore prescribed for them, and left them medicines.

We reached Perryville after dark, Mr. Thomasson giving his place in the buggy to a young soldier whom we found lying by the way-side, sick and unable to walk. I saw him placed in hospital and properly cared for.

On our arrival we learned that we were the first to bring relief where

help was needed more than tongue can tell. Instead of 700, as first reported, at least 2,500 Union and rebel soldiers were at that time lying in great suffering and destitution about Perryville and Harrodsburg.

In addition to these, many had already been removed, and we had met numbers of those whose wounds were less severe walking and begging their way to Louisville, 85 miles distant. To these we frequently gave help and comfort by sharing with them the slender stock of food and spirits we had taken with us.

There had been almost no preparation for the care of the wounded at Perryville, and as a consequence the suffering from want of *help* of all kinds, as well as proper accommodations, food, medicines and hospital stores, was excessive. For this state of things, however, the surgeons are not to blame. Both those in authority and those in attendance had done and were doing all in their power to prevent and mitigate the suffering to which I have alluded. The fault lies higher than they—with the superior military authorities who withheld from the surgeon the information, and denied them the resources which alone would have enabled them to meet the emergencies of the case. Dr. Marks, of the 10th Wisconsin, was in charge at Perryville. He received us kindly, took care of our horse, and gave us shelter. We slept on the floor. In the morning he secured for me two rooms which were put in order, the three loads of goods taken in and opened, and a U. S. S. Com. sign placed over the door. Soon after the twenty-one ambulances arrived loaded with our stores. At the same time came Dr. Goddard and Mr. Fosdick from Louisville, Dr. Davis, Dr. Atwater and Mr. Johnson from Cincinnati, (the latter in charge of supplies,) all of whom rendered efficient service.

Surgeons were then notified that stores could be had, and they were rapidly given out. There were, at this time, some 1,800 wounded in and about Perryville. They were all very dirty, few had straw or other bedding, some were without blankets, others had no shirts, and even now, five days after the battle, some were being brought in from temporary places of shelter, whose wounds had not yet been dressed. Every house was a hospital, all crowded, and with very little to eat. At the Seminary building there was some fresh mutton, and a large kettle in which soup was being made. I left at this house a box of bandages, comfortables, shirts and drawers, and a keg of good butter. Three days after, at this hospital, I found that the surgeons had improvised bedsteads, and had provided comfortable beds for all their patients from the stores of the Sanitary Commission.

Leaving Dr. Goddard to superintend the further distribution of supplies, on the 12th I went, with Mr. Thomasson, to Danville. We here found

the wants of the sick as urgent as those of the wounded at Perryville. The Court House was literally packed,—many had eaten nothing during the day, most of them nothing since morning. I inquired if soup could be made here. The surgeons thought not, but kindly gave me authority to get it if I could. Mr. Thomasson introduced me to some good Union men, through whose assistance I was enabled to succeed in the effort. It was now 5 o'clock P. M. There was no *beef* in the city, but a butcher agreed to bring an animal, kill it, and have it ready in two hours. There was no *water* in the town—the wells were all dry—but the same good butcher sent and hauled water in barrels. Then there were no *kettles* for sale, all having been taken by the rebels; but at last one was found in a private family; another was discovered two miles out of the city, owned by Mr. John J. Creig; he sent that in, saying that he should not want it until hog-killing time, and would lend it. No *pails* were to be had for love nor money, but I bought some covered firkins with handles, a wash tub and spade, then dug trenches and laid stones with my own hands, and thus set both kettles. I made a fire of some old boards found in the Court-House yard, sent a soldier for some pepper and salt, and at half-past 10 o'clock I had the satisfaction of seeing two 32-gallon kettles of nutritious and palatable soup ready for distribution. This was given out at once, but by other hands than mine, as by this time I was completely exhausted. The remainder of the beef was brought in in the morning and the kettles kept boiling.

I should not forget to mention the very essential services rendered by Mr. Thomasson. He introduced me to the right men, and worked, himself, at anything and everything, and most efficiently. While at Perryville, feeling the disgrace of having numbers of the enemy's dead lying yet unburied, we called on Col. Read, the commander of the post, and obtained a detail of negroes and *secesh* citizens, who worked two days, burying several hundred, and completing the task.

On the 15th, having with much difficulty obtained horses and saddles, we rode on to the advance of the army, reaching General Mitchell's division, in General Gilbert's Corps, after dark.

On making a hasty inspection of the condition of the troops, I found that the new regiments had suffered much from the severity of the service they had performed, and the exposure to which they had been subjected. The men had made long marches, were without tents, had only one blanket or an overcoat each—some one, some the other—their food, hard bread and bacon, beef occasionally, no vegetables. For new recruits, this had proved rather trying, and over ten per cent. had been disabled by it.

I found several of the regimental surgeons with no medicines whatever,

and they informed me they had received strict orders not to take any. Some of them told me they had a few medicines which they carried on their persons. The spirit of the army is not what it should be. Through distrust of the Commanding General, they are seriously demoralized.*

On my return to Danville, I found the number of sick considerably increased. As there were many who were without shelter, I looked around to find some building where they might be carried, and, at least, have a roof over their heads. After some search a carriage-shop was found which would answer the purpose. This belonged to Mr. J. W. Welch. At my solicitation he opened it, had the carriages removed, and placed it at my disposal. I then procured two loads of straw, which was spread upon the floor, and about two hundred men were brought in and laid upon it.

Returning to Perryville, I had the satisfaction of seeing the condition of the wounded considerably improved, thanks to the untiring exertions of the surgeons in charge, and the stores we had placed at their disposal.

They are still, however, far too much crowded, and their condition in many respects is susceptible of improvement. At the Seminary Hospital, the best of the series, there were seventy-nine wounded, accommodated as follows :

1st Room,	25	×	25	×	10	feet,	22	beds,	6	nurses.
2d "	18	×	20	×	10	"	12	"	4	"
3d "	12	×	18	×	10	"	10	"	4	"
4th "	25	×	25	×	10	"	20	"	6	"
5th "	18	×	18	×	10	"	15	"	4	"

These were all badly wounded. At this time there were about one thousand of our men, and eight hundred of the confederates, having similar accommodations.

The government supplies not having arrived, and more stores being needed, on the 18th I returned to Louisville to report to you, and procure further assistance. Ten tons of sanitary stores, on five large wagons, have left to-day for Perryville, and I shall start to-morrow morning with Messrs. Thomasson and Butler, to see to their distribution.

Yours Respectfully,

A. W. REED,

Inspector, S. C.

* Since removed.

REPORT OF DR. WARRINER,

Inspector San. Commission, on the late Battle near Corinth.

COLUMBUS, KY., Oct. 23d.

DR. J. S. NEWBERRY :

My Dear Sir,—I have just returned from Corinth, and the scene of the late desperate attempt of the rebel army to storm and capture that stronghold. My first duty was of course to the wounded, and my attention was directed accordingly. As you are already aware, the illness and absence of my chief assistant here, had made it impracticable for me to visit that field, until a week or so after the battle. I was, however, ably represented—or rather the Commission was—through our agent, Mr. Goodsmith. At Jackson, when the battle occurred, he hurried to Corinth immediately that communication—which had been broken by the enemy just before the battle—was restored. Our stores at Corinth were at the time nearly exhausted; and only a little less so at this place. At Jackson we had more, and a tolerably ample supply at Bolivar. Major Robb, the Illinois State Agent, and acting agent of the U. S. San. Com. at Jackson, had, but a few days previous to the battle, with my advice, established a temporary depot of supplies at Bolivar, and with stores derived from the depot here had stocked it for the dimly anticipated emergency. We had all been cherishing for some days glimmering apprehensions of battle somewhere, and from such data as could be gathered from outside observations, our attention was directed to Bolivar and Jackson, rather than Corinth, as the point where stores should be collected for the occasion. Hence, this unequal, and as the event proved, unfortunate accumulation at the point where the urgency of need was not the greatest to say the least. The, to us, unexpected recoil of our troops upon Corinth before the pressure of superior numbers, balked our calculations somewhat. Still there was abundant demand for the supplies at Bolivar. For the battle, as you are aware, was not all fought at Corinth, although it was fiercest and deadliest there. The four days pursuit following the great fight of Saturday, Oct. 4th, was a prolonged battle, and 470 of the wounded thence accruing were taken to Bolivar. Had stores been abundant at all these points, Bolivar had none too many. Meanwhile every available article in our rooms at this point (Columbus,) were pushed forward on the first train that traversed the route to Corinth after the battle. I had already received notice of a splendid shipment from Cleveland, Ohio, and another smaller one from Buffalo. Here I was expecting them by every boat from Cairo. They did not arrive under three or four days. After their arrival, we were delayed in their shipment to Corinth a couple of days by what

seems to have been a misinterpretation of an order from Gen. Grant to the Q. M. here, to ship nothing but forage. The General, on being remonstrated with by Major Robb, declared that it was never his policy or intention at any time to exclude Sanitary stores that were immediately needed by the inmates of hospitals, whether wounded or sick; and an order in accordance therewith was issued at once, which secured to us every possible and needful facility for transportation. We have experienced no difficulty in regard to the matter since. Meantime as bad luck, or overwork of R. R. agents, or perchance their neglect of duty, would have it, the limited supply mentioned above as having gone on the first train over the road, were not left at Corinth, but taken on to Chewalla along the road to Memphis. It was some three days before they were recovered. So that altogether a trifle less than a week elapsed after that stormy and terrible Saturday, before the accustomed relief from the Sanitary Department arrived. The only urgent and pressing demand was for bed-quilts, shirts, and drawers. All these we had been steadily issuing, according to our supply, for some weeks, or I may say months. And although that supply was very considerable, it had not kept ahead of the demand sufficiently to enable us to meet this sudden emergency at any but the one point indicated above, viz., Bolivar. There, as I am assured by Major Robb, who made prompt and due inspections at the place, the supply was adequate to the demand.

But our stores arrived at the needed points at last, and in ample measure; and they came in time, at all events, to be an unspeakable blessing and comfort to the sufferers. It must be added here that the misfortune of this delay was greatly mitigated by the promptness with which government supplies were forwarded, and the approximate fullness as to variety of these supplies. All needful surgical attention was also at hand, together with ample hospital shelter. The battle occurring on the verge of the town and near to the large General Hospital, the wounded were saved the pain of a long ambulance ride on the one hand, and the necessity of lying on the unsheltered field, on the other.

At present the wounded are all comfortably provided for in all practicable ways, and, taking all circumstances into account, I can say that no battle during the war with whose ghastly sequel I have been conversant, and connected with, has been attended with a slighter measure of suffering in proportion to the number of wounded, suffering arising from the lack of requisite shelter, appliances and attention, than the momentous and decisive "Battle of Corinth," October 4th, 1862.

Surgeon N. Gray, in charge of the general hospital, Corinth, devoted, busy, faithful, and skillful, has worked like a hero, and worked with an eye single to the welfare and the relief of his patients.

I have not yet been able to obtain the exact number of the wounded from the late battle or *battles*. Dr. Gray estimates the number that had come under his care, at a little over 1,500. The number placed in hospital at Bolivar as stated above, was 470. None were sent to Jackson. Dr. Gray has sent nearly 1,000 from his hospital to northern hospitals. A small portion of them have been sent to Mound City, and the remainder to St. Louis, and points still higher up the river. I am not aware that any have yet been removed from Bolivar.

A little over 1,500 of the enemy's wounded fell into our hands. A very heavy percentage of these have already died. The survivors, with a very few exceptions, have been placed in a separate hospital at Iuka. This town is at present on what is practically neutral ground. Our own medical director has general supervision of the hospital, but the surgical and other duties connected therewith are chiefly performed by the rebels.

Dr. Gay represents the patients there as being in a tolerably comfortable condition, and surrounded by their friends, the citizens of the town. No requisition for Sanitary stores had been made by their surgeon upon the Commission up to day before yesterday, the time of my leaving Corinth. Yesterday a telegram from Mr. Goodsmith informed me that he had received a pressing appeal for these from their hospital. He asked for articles before issuing them. I answered that in case of actual distress he should issue to them in limited quantities; and that he should announce to them, meantime, that this is our response to their treatment of Gen. Prentiss and his men.

I should like, by the way, further instructions from you in regard to this matter of issuing to rebel wounded. Where they are inmates of our own hospitals, occupying wards in common with our own men, the case is plain. But the circumstances and conditions of this hospital at Iuka are peculiar, and I have been in some doubt in regard to my duty in the case.

What say you? Can I improve the above order? Or how shall I modify it?*

My attention has been arrested during the late inspection by the emphatic and uniform testimony of surgeons respecting the relative mortality amongst the wounded of the two armies. It is this, that with a given severity of wound the mortality amongst the rebels is vastly greater than with us. And a concurrent fact, or brace of facts, is, that they were scan-

* Our orders are to have all requisitions made by rebel surgeons for their sick on neutral ground carefully examined at the Hospital itself, by our inspectors, and then supplied with proportionate care and humanity.—H. W. B.

tily clothed and meagerly fed. Their haversacks were either empty or held only ears of raw corn. A whole pair of shoes was nowhere to be found amongst them; and the rest of their clothing was in harmony. I cannot doubt the existence of an important and intimate connection between these several facts. The fighting of the rebels on every field where their desperate treason has encountered Yankee obstinacy and Yankee loyalty has indicated no lack of prowess and of *active* physical vigor. But the power to endure wounds is strikingly inferior to that of our own men. This weakness was never more signally illustrated than in the late conflict. And the unhappy captives never betrayed a worse plight in the matter of commissary supplies than now. These facts are instructive, and hint at the appropriate treatment of wounded men generally. *High feeding* for one thing is certainly indicated.

Our supplies on hand at the present time are encouragingly large. Yesterday we received a splendid shipment from Cincinnati of comforts shirts, drawers, and other clothing, and eatables. It came per Adams' express. We have also received large shipments from Chicago since the battle, which, with lot referred to above from Cleveland, give us a quite ample larder.

I shall write you again in a day or two. I forwarded my accounts yesterday.

How about credentials for Fone, Fogle, and Goodsmith? Did you forget that?

Yours, cordially,

H. A. WARRINER.

We need one more man, and that is Mr. —, in this department. I wish to establish a permanent depot at Bolivar. We *can* get along without more help, but can do it much better *with*.

I have no time to look this letter over. Excuse the blunders.

We add a valuable unofficial letter from Dr. Warriner to the President of the St. Louis Western Sanitary Commission, on account of the importance of its general views. The letter was forwarded by Dr. Eliot as an expression of the co-operation of the Board at St. Louis with the Sanitary Commission:

COLUMBUS, Ky., Oct. 25.

MY DEAR MR. YEATMAN,—

Enclosed find receipt for your timely and welcome shipment of stores.

The whole lot came to hand in good order some four days since. I only received your letter and the invoice this morning. I forwarded the stores with others to Corinth and Jackson at once. I think you are quite right in your views respecting the desirableness of sending such stores as you have to contribute to this department, to my care here. Everything we have is forwarded promptly. We have a dépôt trustily managed at Jackson, another ditto at Corinth, and a sub-dépôt at Bolivar. Our facilities for distribution are complete, and goods distributed through us are more likely to be given where they are most needed, and to be used with economy than where they are sent from Northern dépôts direct. The simple reason for this is, that the parties who send to you, for instance, for supplies are just as assiduous in their applications to us as others. And they are not in the habit of informing us as to these extra, outside supplies. The consequence is, that we inevitably give to them (or they inevitably receive) more than a fair proportion of these invaluable bounties. Had we a surplus of these it would be all very well. I do not suppose that any one gets more than he can apply to the augmenting of his comfort. But vast as this outpouring of the people's generosity is—as our books, and store-rooms, and army hospitals everywhere attest—you and I know full well that it has never passed, nor even reached the limits of demand. Any unequal distribution, therefore, adds a *little* comfort in one place at the expense of *much* suffering in another. It is the study of my days and nights to equalize more and more this distribution.

Another objection to shipping goods directly to the field past this point is the extreme uncertainty of their ever reaching their destination. We ship them along the R. R. through the Q. M., who feels more or less responsibility for their safe arrival. We know what we ship and watch them through. If any boxes are lost, the responsible parties are promptly "nudged" up about it. And human nature being what it is, said parties, under said stimulus, will take a little pains with their work. You see at once how these conservative influences are wanting where goods are shipped in the other manner.

Respecting the policy of sending a corps of nurses immediately after a battle, I would say: First, their influences and the need for them are greatest in the very hours of the conflict, and diminish in geometric ratio with the lapse of time thereafter. It is plain, therefore, that they could never be at hand when most needed, unless they remain with the army. Second, I am fully persuaded, after much observation and reflection, that females can only be of valuable service in general hospitals, and there they should be permanently employed, if at all. I do not believe that the field is the place for them either during, or immediately subsequent to a battle. The

case would be different if any surgeons and other officials had a better and truer appreciation of skillful female nurses. It would also be different if a large proportion of these nurses, were of that admirable and efficient type, sent forth under the auspices of the St. Louis Sanitary Commission. For I must do you the honor to say, that your selections in this respect have been more felicitous than any I thus far have met with. But taking all conditions into account, I cannot but think that ladies under the circumstances in question would encounter too many obstructions, and too much personal inconvenience to be counterbalanced by the extra good they might do. Meantime, I have certainly no more confidence in my own wisdom than in yours, and I only give you my suggestions because you do me the honor to ask for them. The gist of my suggestion is, then, this: A corps of male nurses sent to a given battle-field would be of inestimable service, if they could get there in season; a corps of female nurses would find their good services well nigh neutralized by the inherent inconvenience of their situation, and by the factitious obstructions which prejudice would at such a time throw in their way.

Hoping to hear from you again soon, I remain,

Cordially, yours,

H. A. WARRINER.